

In the Claims:

The status of the claims is as follows:

1. (Canceled)
2. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 4, wherein said non-magnetic mass is made of a resin material.
3. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 4, wherein said non-magnetic mass is made of a non-magnetic metallic material.
4. (Previously Presented) A thin film magnetic head comprising:
 - a lower magnetic pole layer extending rearward from a front end exposed at a medium-opposed surface, said lower magnetic pole layer being made of a nitride;
 - a depression located on an upper surface of the lower magnetic pole layer;
 - a lower auxiliary magnetic pole defined in the lower magnetic pole layer between the medium-opposed surface and the depression;
 - a non-magnetic mass embedded in the depression; and
 - an upper magnetic pole opposing a front end to the lower auxiliary magnetic pole at the medium-opposed surface.

5. (Previously Presented) A thin film magnetic head comprising:

- a lower magnetic pole layer extending rearward from a front end exposed at a medium-opposed surface, said lower magnetic pole layer being made of a composite material comprising a magnetic material and an oxide;
- a depression located on an upper surface of the lower magnetic pole layer;
- a lower auxiliary magnetic pole defined in the lower magnetic pole layer between the medium-opposed surface and the depression;
- a non-magnetic mass embedded in the depression; and
- an upper magnetic pole opposing a front end to the lower auxiliary magnetic pole at the medium-opposed surface

6-13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 5, wherein said non-magnetic mass is made of a resin material.

15. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 5, wherein said non-magnetic mass is made of a non-magnetic metallic material.

16. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 4, wherein the lower magnetic layer and the lower auxiliary magnetic pole are formed based on one of sputtering and vapor-deposition.

17. (Previously Presented) The thin film magnetic head according to claim 5, wherein the lower magnetic layer and the lower auxiliary magnetic pole are formed based on one of sputtering and vapor-deposition.